

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 2, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2) to make certain laws applicable to the legislative branch of the Federal Government.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

(1) Ford-Feingold amendment No. 4, to prohibit the personal use of accrued frequent flier miles by Members and employees of the Congress.

(2) McConnell amendment No. 8 (to amendment No. 4) to prohibit the personal use of accrued frequent flier miles by Members and employees of the Senate and clarify Senate regulations on the use of frequent flier miles.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

AMENDMENT NO. 9

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate with respect to a timetable for the Senate's prompt consideration of comprehensive gift ban legislation)

Mr. WELLSTONE. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, before I send my amendment to the desk, let me one more time thank my colleague, the Senator from Iowa, for his leadership on this Congressional Accountability Act. I think it is a very important piece of legislation. I am certainly confident that by the end of the day we will indeed vote on this important piece of legislation and it will be a very strong affirmative vote.

Mr. President, before I send my amendment to the desk, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be laid aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, let me just briefly give some background and talk about the amendment.

This amendment essentially says is that it is the sense of the Senate that the Senate should consider comprehensive gift ban legislation no later than May 31, 1995.

At the end of last week, the Senate defeated a tough comprehensive gift ban amendment that was offered by Senator LEVIN, myself, and Senators FEINGOLD and LAUTENBERG. I regret that my Republican colleagues were unwilling to move forward on this piece of legislation which I think had everything in the world to do with congressional accountability. My Republican colleagues who opposed that amendment, even though many had co-

sponsored the same language just a few months ago, contended that it was more an issue of timing.

But it did seem to me then and it seems to me now that if we could be ready to move forward this week on an extremely important piece of legislation dealing with unfunded mandates, that goes to the heart of the interrelationship between Federal and State and local governments, and goes to the very heart of what Federalism is about, we should be able to address this straightforward issue without a lot of further consideration. And if, in fact, my colleagues are willing to amend the U.S. Constitution with a balanced budget amendment with just a couple of weeks preparation, then it seems to me astounding that we are not willing to move forward on a very simple amendment that has everything in the world to do with reform, which just simply puts an end to this practice of accepting the gifts, perks, lobbyist-sponsored vacation travel, and the like offered by special interests.

This amendment, Mr. President, simply attempts to put the Senate on record formally in favor of returning to this issue promptly and acting on tough gift ban legislation no later than the end of May 1995, which the majority leader has indicated it was his intention to do.

Mr. President, the nice thing about this amendment is that it is consistent with the debate and the discussion that we had on the floor of the Senate last week. At that time, Senator COHEN, who has again provided a tremendous amount of leadership on these reform issues, said on the floor: "I intend to give Senator DOLE an opportunity to bring it up in a relatively short time," the gift ban. "He has not given me a specific timetable, but I would say within the next couple of months, I expect we will consider this legislation and any amendments that might be offered to it—and I suspect there will be amendments. There are people on this side that still do not agree with the provisions that we supported."

But, again, there will be action on this; it will be considered within the next several months.

Senator DOLE, the majority leader, came to the floor and said:

I certainly commend the Senator from Michigan, Senator LEVIN, for his leadership. But we believe there are some changes that could be made even in the gift ban. This amendment would not be effective in any event until the end of May 1995.

It would be my hope that by that time we will have even a better package.

So I really am essentially following the lead of the majority leader with this amendment. As he pointed out, our amendment would not have become effective until the end of May. I simply think that it is time now for the Senate to go formally on record that, in fact, we will take action no later than the end of May.

Mr. President, let me give this amendment a little bit of context, a brief history.

Almost 2 years ago, we started dealing with this problem of gifts being lavished on Members of Congress from outside sources. And I had an amendment which simply said lobbyists had to disclose specifically what these gifts were. I said at the time it was a first step, and I meant that.

Mr. President, that lobbying registration bill, with the amendment that I had to that bill, passed the Senate by a vote of 95 to 2. Months of waiting took place for the House to act on strong gift ban provisions as a part of the lobbying bill. Then, Senator LAUTENBERG, Senator FEINGOLD, and myself introduced a tough, comprehensive gift ban bill. We introduced a tough, comprehensive gift ban bill. Senator LEVIN's committee then held hearings and reported out a solid, comprehensive, more refined version of our earlier gift bans bill. Under Secretary LEVIN's leadership, we were able to beat back Senate amendments which would have weakened the bill. That bill passed last May by a 95-4 vote.

Prodded in part by this action, the House then acted on a reasonably tough version. A strong version came out of a House-Senate conference committee. Then the lobbying registration gift ban bill to which the gift ban was attached was killed in the last days of the session—I think based upon unfounded complaints by lobbying groups that were concerned about the registration part.

Legislation that we brought forward to the Senate floor last week was very similar to a Senate-passed version last year, and to the conference report; that is to say, the amendment that dealt with gift bans.

Now, Mr. President, on the merits of the gift ban, 37 Republicans, including the majority leader, cosponsored the same legislation. In other words, the wording of the amendment that we brought to the floor dealing with gift ban was essentially identical to the wording that the majority leader and 36 other Republican Senators had voted for last session.

Now, as I wrap up my remarks, and I am about ready to send the amendment to the desk, I make an appeal to my colleagues. I believe my colleagues when they say we are going to act on this. I believe them. But I want to ensure that we do not let this gift ban amendment, this gift ban legislation, slip by in the legislative rush of this session. Again, this is a simple amendment. It puts the Senate on record in favor of acting on a tough, comprehensive gift ban legislation no later than the end of May 1995, precisely what the majority leader has called for.

Mr. President, I do not think I need to again rehearse the substantive arguments in favor of enacting a tough, comprehensive gift ban. We have debated this legislation and we have debated this amendment more than once on the floor of the Senate. I will simply say this: The evidence is irrefutable that the giving of these special favors